



Safe Routes to School State Network Project: 2008 Annual Progress Report

*Building Momentum and Policy Change
By the Safe Routes to School National Partnership*



Changing the Habits of
an Entire Generation

March 2009

In May 2007, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership launched a three-year Safe Routes to School (SRTS) State Network Project to leverage resources in nine states and the District of Columbia to make it safer and easier for children to obtain healthy physical activity through walking and bicycling to schools. This report summarizes the progress that the State Network Project has achieved in its second year of operation, outlines lessons learned, highlights accomplishments in each State Network and suggests next steps to maintain the momentum necessary to build the SRTS program at state levels.

Safe Routes to School is a growing movement to get more children walking and bicycling to school, and to make it safer and more convenient to do so. Programs combine the 5Es of SRTS—evaluation, education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement—and are typically led by parents, teachers, students, elected officials, government agencies and community members. Benefits of SRTS programs can include reduced traffic congestion; improved safety, air quality and community livability; and improved health, which is an important consideration now that nearly one-third of U.S. children and youth are considered obese or overweight.

Primary funding for the SRTS State Network Project has been provided through a grant of more than \$600,000 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In addition, more than \$500,000 in supporting grants has been secured from the Bikes Belong Coalition, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente.

Support for this annual progress report was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, based in Princeton, New Jersey. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and healthcare issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change.

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Table of Contents

- 2 **State Network Project Description**
- 3 **Second Year: Major State Network Accomplishments**
- 4 **Lessons Learned**
- 5 **State Summaries**
- 16 **Local School Project**
- 19 **Next Steps**
- 20 **Resources**

State Network Project Description

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) State Network Project recognizes that in order to get more children to walk and bicycle to school, we must ensure that the \$612 million in 2005–2009 federal SRTS funds are spent, and spent well, and we must leverage additional resources that will create policy changes to improve the built environment. The State Network Project goals are to:

- 1 increase physical activity in school-age children in grades K–8 by increasing the number of children walking and bicycling to schools in 10 key locations;**
- 2 facilitate success of the federal SRTS program in key locations; and**
- 3 institutionalize SRTS state-level programs in key locations so they are sustainable and are not dependent on and do not end after one short burst of funding.**

The SRTS National Partnership is a network of more than 400 non-profit organizations, government agencies, schools and professionals working to set goals, share best practices, secure funding and provide educational materials to agencies that implement SRTS programs. Since its inception, the SRTS National Partnership's state network

manager, Robert Ping, has led the State Network Project in collaboration with Deb Hubsmith, director, and Brooke Driesse, program associate. The SRTS National Partnership selected the nine states and the District of Columbia for the State Network Project based on each state's need for the program and its capacity to support it. The State Network Project considered the number and percentage of overweight and obese children within the state, as well as the number and percentage of minority children in low-income families. Other criteria included the state's ability to leverage strategic partnerships and make a national impact.

In each jurisdiction the SRTS National Partnership contracted with a lead organization to provide a State Network organizer for at least 10 hours per week. The organizers recruit Network partners and manage the State Networks, which leverage assistance from their numerous statewide and local partner organizations to advance state policy changes. State Networks participate in monthly calls to advance priority policies called for in their SRTS State Action Plan.

Second Year: Major State Network Accomplishments



All SRTS state programs are now active, and State Departments of Transportation have already awarded \$162.5 million in federal funds to local communities to support infrastructure and education programs that promote safety and physical activity for children traveling to school.

All SRTS state networks have conducted extensive local outreach to increase knowledge of and build support for SRTS and policy changes that improve transportation, education and the environment.

A learning network among the 10 jurisdictions has helped to increase knowledge and facilitate sharing resources, best practices and model policies.

Ongoing network partner recruitment in the second year of the program has increased the capacity and effectiveness of the networks.

All state and federal elected officials and the Departments of Education, Health and Transportation in the 10 network jurisdictions have received printed materials describing the progress of their project.

Network organizers met with their state Department of Transportation SRTS coordinators to collaborate in an annual planning session and increase cooperation around long-term goals for policy changes that support a healthy built environment for children.

Lessons Learned

In the second year of operation, the State Network Project has refined its practices and increased its influence. Below are some of the lessons learned in 2008 for how to create effective policy changes that provide opportunities to increase physical activity and safety for children walking and bicycling to and from schools.

1

Continue to Recruit New Partners

By involving a wide variety of statewide partners and local communities, each jurisdiction will discover more ways to accomplish mutual policy objectives. In some cases, organizers may be surprised to hear that an important partner is going to move on, or that a department or organization is closing down. Even a large, established network may find that adding a new partner with specialized knowledge and connections could play a pivotal role in influencing policy change. Getting together in person can also be helpful in building relationships and trust. In larger states, it can be costly and difficult to bring State Network partners together in person, but the benefits can outweigh the effort.

2

Have Patience, and Don't Give Up

Most of the goals of a State Network's Action Plan involve complex, institutionalized policies or procedures that will require a cultural shift away from 'business as usual' for agencies, schools or communities. The organization or individual being asked to make a change may not be motivated to do so, and may have to be convinced that the change is in their best interest. In some cases, a critical network partner or agency staff person changes jobs, leaving vacancies and gaps in network capacity. Change can take place through a lot of small steps over time, or a few large ones quickly organized by a well-connected group. Capitalize on even small openings for potential policy change. Consistent attention and prioritization will be required to maintain and increase momentum. Policy change takes time, dedication and resources, but it is very rewarding when it happens.

3

Be Strategic with Outreach to Media

General media interest in SRTS activities has been very strong. For example SRTS funding announcements, International Walk to School Day, state conferences and other announcements can result in positive news coverage ranging from local television and radio stations to major newspapers. This type of coverage can build knowledge of and community support for SRTS in your community. When appropriate and needed, taking a policy issue to the news media through editorials, opinion editorials, blogs or news reports can also be very effective. If a policy is being

implemented poorly or ignored because of internal philosophies that don't align with the needs of the state or community, it may require public exposure of the deficiency to encourage change. This type of media outreach is generally used as a last resort, since it can generate stress between the implementing agency or organization and the State Network. A follow-up meeting with the agency can help to clarify goals and next steps.

4

Ensure That the State Network is Running Efficiently

Clear and consistent communication of intentions and Network goals is critical. Collaboration builds buy-in and prevents burnout among leaders. Follow-up is key, and partners should strive to communicate about updates and distribute draft documents well before a task deadline. Meeting agendas should be task- or goal-oriented, and should be distributed at least a week before an upcoming meeting. Meeting minutes should include action items, completion dates and names of responsible parties. Network leaders also should regularly communicate their progress and positively motivate partners into action. A good network chair can inspire and facilitate productive discussions, and add credibility and public respect to the network.

5

Learn From Others, Don't Reinvent the Wheel

Partners can enrich their State Network by crossing state borders or by finding others who have been working on similar efforts within the state. Reaching out to key stakeholders who are outside the core network to share best practices and experiences helps to renew enthusiasm, generate new ideas and amplify the pressure on achieving policy goals.

6

Continue to Look for Funds and Other Ways to Increase Network Capacity

State Networks ideally need at least a half-time organizer, so partners should keep looking for additional funds and other ways to boost the networks' capacity. Sometimes a volunteer program or university project may be available to help accomplish tasks or implement a campaign. Grants and donations can give a boost to a policy or pay for more organizer time. In addition, Web site services, printing and office space can sometimes be funded through a grant or in-kind donation.

State Summaries

The following state summaries briefly highlight the progress made in each of the 10 State Network Project jurisdictions from January through December 2008.

Each Network is working to improve policies in their state to make it more convenient, safe and efficient for children (and their parents) to walk and bicycle to and from school. In addition to the federal funding program, the State Networks have examined policies in their states that affect the ability of kids to walk or bicycle to school, such as school siting, complete streets, school wellness policies, additional SRTS revenue from other government funds and traffic fines, and bicycle and pedestrian safety education. The Networks created detailed action plans, identified Network partners to take the lead on primary policies, and when needed, formed action teams to work on relevant policies. The State Networks also researched and worked on advancing policy issues and opportunities that are unique to their state, and often made recommendations on how transportation policies affect land use, the environment and public health.



California

State SRTS Program

The California Network conducted extensive outreach to local communities to promote the California Dept. of Transportation (Caltrans) SR2S Cycle 7—a state-funded application process where a total of \$52 million was available for grants. The Network also advertised the federal SRTS Cycle 2 program where \$46 million was available. In both cases, only one out of every four applications was able to be funded because of the huge demand for the program. The California Network also organized a meeting with Caltrans and their non-infrastructure grant recipients to discuss how to handle grant implementation issues, which have been problematic for non-traditional grant recipients. Caltrans responded by developing an 11-step checklist, extending the contract deadline and modifying other procedures to ease implementation at the local level.

School Siting

In July 2008, the California Network's Ad-Hoc Coalition for Healthy School Siting received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the National Trust for Historic Preservation to advance school siting and joint use policies in California. The grant will help foster more community-centered schools, smart growth and improved land use. The Coalition continues to stay in dialog with the California Department of Education related to updating its School Siting policies, and gave a presentation on school siting at the California School Board Association conference in December 2008.

Reducing Greenhouse Gases

The California Network also has been involved in the implementation process for AB32, California's landmark 2006 legislation which requires the state

to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020. The Network developed recommendations for the California Air Resource Board, which is the implementing agency for AB32, that include making SRTS and school siting part of the AB32 implementation plan. The Network also worked with the AB32 ClimatePlan partnership to secure their support for advocating for school-based recommendations associated with reducing greenhouse gas emissions through transportation and land-use solutions.

Other Accomplishments

During 2008 the California Network also worked with the California State Parent-Teacher Association on the implementation of AB321, which provides a mechanism for local communities to reduce traffic speeds to 15 miles per hour in school zones.

In addition, the California Network partnered with the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) in the process of revising their *CHPS Best Practices Manual*, and CHPS agreed to four of the five recommendations suggested by the California Network, which were focused on issues related to bicycle parking, access to schools and land use.

During 2008, Caltrans also updated its complete streets policy, requiring that all roads managed by the department consider the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians in the planning, design, construction and maintenance of roads. This will help ensure that sought-after SRTS funds are spent to fix existing problems, and that a separate proactive community-oriented approach can be used for new or reconstructed streets.

Through the state's Strategic Highway Safety Implementation Plan process, Network partners secured SRTS as a priority for making communities more walkable.

The California State Network is made up of 26 organizations, with the SRTS National Partnership serving as the lead agency. Some of its partners include: the California Bicycle Coalition; the California Department of Public Health; the California State Parent-Teacher Association; Caltrans; the Cities Counties Schools Partnership; the California School Board Association; the Local Government Commission; the Prevention Institute; the UC Berkeley Center for Cities and Schools; the UC Berkeley Traffic Safety Center; and WALK Sacramento.

District of Columbia

State SRTS Program

The District of Columbia (DC) Network has served as the District Department of Transportation's SRTS Advisory Council since the program launched in May 2008, and has been working closely with the SRTS coordinator to ensure the success of the SRTS program. The DC Network assisted in the school selection process for the SRTS Pilot Schools program, and was able to increase the number of schools being served by DC's pilot SRTS program from 10 to 12 by leveraging additional support through the DC City Council.

Crossing Guards

The DC Network also spearheaded an overhaul of DC's Crossing Guard Location Placement Policy by organizing a collaborative meeting that determined which parameters should be included in the new policy, such as deficient pedestrian crossings identified in the DC Pedestrian Master Plan.

Pedestrian Safety

In early 2008, following a sharp increase in pedestrian fatalities in 2007, the DC Network began to educate legislators, pedestrian advocacy groups and District Government on ways to increase funding for pedestrian safety efforts. As a result, the

DC Council established an annually recurring Safety Fund of \$1.5 million to be used for pedestrian and bicycle safety measures, including areas near schools.

School Siting

The DC Network is using a September 2008 DC Department of Education policy report, *Quality Schools, Healthy Neighborhoods and the Future of DC*, to encourage the agency to create a proximity advantage on waiting lists for students living within 0.5 miles of a public charter school. This policy will also allow for students to attend a DC public school that is located closer to where they live than their 'in-boundary' school, and will provide additional incentives to parents and students to encourage the use of alternate modes of transportation to school such as walking and bicycling.

Other Accomplishments

The DC Network successfully encouraged the DC Council to create a Walk to School Day Resolution and a Safe Routes to School Resolution, and continues to encourage and educate local government regarding implementation of complete streets.

The DC State Network is made up of 19 partners, with the Washington Area Bicyclist Association serving as the lead agency. Some of its partners include: ASPIRA; the Coalition for Smarter Growth; the Council of the District of Columbia; the DC Department of Health-Policy, Planning and Research; the DC Department of Health-Nutrition and Physical Activity Programs; the DC Office of Planning-Neighborhood Planning; DC Public Schools, Physical Education and Health; DC Safe Kids; the District Department of Transportation; Howard University, Civil Engineering Department; the Injury Free Coalition for Kids; the Metropolitan Police Department; and the Public Charter School Board.

State SRTS Program

The Georgia SRTS program, administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), experienced significant delays in launching the federally funded program, which was authorized by the federal government to begin in 2005. Administrative delays and errors, staff turnover and a program redesign resulted in Georgia taking last place out of all 50 states in launching its SRTS program. Without the Georgia Network, the \$17 million available for the Georgia SRTS could still be sitting on the table. To get the program moving, the Georgia Network corresponded with the commissioner of transportation, and met with a GDOT board member to discuss the delayed status of the SRTS program. The Georgia Network then educated congressional members about the delay of the SRTS program. As a result, a Georgia Congressional delegation letter requesting no further delays in the program's launch was submitted to the GDOT commissioner. In August 2008, a subsequent administrative error delayed the program again. Through a tip from the Network, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* published an editorial on the delays in September 2008. GDOT launched the State SRTS program soon afterwards, with the opening of the infrastructure funding application period.

Promoting Health Benefits

To counter a GDOT policy stating that the health benefits of participating in a SRTS program would not be promoted throughout the life of the federally funded program, the Georgia Network convened an action team to promote the health benefits of SRTS. As a result, State Network partners were interviewed for an *Associated Press* article in December 2007 that featured the health benefits of SRTS. The article was published by media outlets around Georgia and the U.S. Three Georgia Network partners met with a GDOT board member in summer 2008 to discuss the issue, and that board member now oversees the SRTS program within GDOT. The original policy has since been reversed, allowing for health promotion in association with the implementation of the SRTS program.

Wellness Policies

The Georgia Network collaborated with the Georgia Department of Education to get information about SRTS included in materials distributed to school district personnel at three Georgia education-related conferences. This policy outreach is influencing local school districts to incorporate SRTS elements into their wellness policies.

The Georgia State Network is made up of 16 partners, with Georgia Bikes! Serving as the lead agency. Some of its partners include: the American Heart Association; the Federal Highway Administration; Georgia Action for Healthy Kids; the Georgia Bicycle Dealers Association; the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; the Georgia Department of Transportation (North); PEDS; and SafeRoutes Athens.

State SRTS Program

The Illinois Network serves as an advisory committee to Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)'s SRTS program, conducts program outreach and serves as a resource to local SRTS stakeholders. Because the 300 applications and 1,044 projects requesting federal SRTS funding that were submitted in 2007 exceeded the available funds, IDOT agreed to release the remaining SRTS funds (for fiscal years 2008 and 2009) in 2008 in an effort to allocate resources to motivated local communities without delay.

School Siting

The Illinois Network also collaborated with the Healthy Schools Campaign and Office of the Lieutenant Governor to win an EPA-funded grant through the National Trust for Historic Preservation for the Sustainable Schools in Illinois project, which will promote the use of community-centered schools as anchors for sustainable development, smart growth and school transportation. Tasks for the project include forming a policy board on sustainable schools, hosting public listening and networking sessions, developing a white paper to analyze and recommend sustainable school building and transportation practices and convening a sustainable schools symposium in March 2009. Illinois Network members served a key role in positioning this project to focus heavily on school transportation and its impact on sustainability.

Complete Streets

Following the passage of a statewide law in October 2007 requiring all Illinois roadways to be built to complete street standards, the Illinois Network partnered with IDOT in 2008 to expedite the new policy's implementation and the training of IDOT engineering staff. At the Network's urging, IDOT hired a consultant to redevelop and update its entire design manual, to include complete streets policy recommendations which will ensure that all new and reconstructed roads include the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians.

Other Accomplishments

In August 2008, the Illinois Network and IDOT hosted the first ever state SRTS conference, featuring a SRTS State Network Project workshop.

The Illinois Network is working with IDOT's Traffic Safety department to promote SRTS regionally through their Section 402 safety grant liaisons.

The Illinois Network's Wellness action team met with the Illinois State Board of Education and presented at the state wellness conference in February 2008.

The Illinois State Network is made up of 19 organizations with the Active Transportation Alliance serving as the lead agency. Some of the partners include: the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District; the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Chicago Public Schools; the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children, the Federal Highway Administration; the Healthy Schools Campaign; the Illinois Department of Transportation; the Illinois Department of Public Health; the League of Illinois Bicyclists; the Office of Illinois Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn; and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.

Kentucky

State SRTS Program

After evaluating the small number of 2007 SRTS non-infrastructure grant applications submitted to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, the Kentucky Network developed strategies for working with the SRTS coordinator on promotion of the SRTS application process and disseminating planning methods for increasing non-infrastructure knowledge and interest among local communities.

Wellness Policies

Since a 2006 law, SB172, requires school districts to create wellness policies that include daily physical activity, the Kentucky Network has been working to update sample statewide policies to include model SRTS language for local school districts. In November 2008 the Kentucky Network recruited stakeholder agencies and organizations to participate in its Kentucky Network wellness policy action team, which identified tasks essential to creating an educational campaign. The team includes the Department of Education's Coordinated School Health program, the Department of Public Health and member organizations of the Partnership

for a Fit Kentucky. In December 2008, a Kentucky Network position paper on SRTS and wellness programs was created and distributed throughout Kentucky.

School Siting

In November 2008, the Kentucky Network studied the guidelines and policies used by the Department of Education regarding school siting and how these policies impact local school location and size, as well as accessibility and land use. The Kentucky Network organized a school siting action team including Preservation Kentucky, the Kentucky chapter of the American Planning Association and the Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts. The team aims to facilitate discussions with the Kentucky Department of Education regarding policy development and to work with the Transportation Subcommittee of the Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts to help influence local school siting decisions to favor community-centered schools.

The Kentucky State Network is made up of 14 partner organizations, with the Kentucky Rails-to-Trails Council serving as the lead agency. Some of its partners include: the Ohio/Kentucky/Indiana Regional Council of Government; the Kentucky Bicycle and Bikeway Commission; Bicycling for Louisville; the Kentucky Injury Prevention Research Center; the Kentucky Department of Public Health-Wellness and Health Promotions; various local health departments; the Marion County School District; the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

Louisiana

Complete Streets

The Louisiana SRTS State Network worked with the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission to develop an informal complete streets policy for nearly \$200 million to rebuild roads damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Streets with schools were assessed for necessary physical improvements, including crosswalks, signage, bike lanes and sidewalk repairs. Louisiana Network recommendations were then incorporated into the street designs.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Beginning in April 2008, Louisiana Network partners attended meetings as part of the project advisory committee for updates to the Louisiana Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Most SRTS policy priorities are being addressed by this planning effort through the development and assignment of specific policy directives to stakeholder groups throughout the state, including Louisiana Network partners. Statewide public meetings were held in July 2008.

Outreach

The Louisiana Network collaborated with the Department of Transportation to host a policy session at the November 2008 SRTS state conference. This session convened invited agencies, elected officials and organizations to

discuss state-level policy issues that could support and further the goals of SRTS. The session featured the following policy areas: complete streets transportation policies; school planning and policies (siting, joint use, etc.); school wellness policies; and bicycle/pedestrian safety curricula and large-scale education and encouragement programs. The Louisiana Network also presented at the Louisiana Smart Growth conference in August 2008 on SRTS programming, showing the connection between smart schools and smart growth, and made a presentation at the Department of Education's Coordinated School Health conference to promote the SRTS program.

Other Accomplishments

The Louisiana Network continues to seek funding for pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented facilities on an ongoing basis because federal recovery funding cannot be used for improvements to the original pre-storm roadway condition.

The Louisiana Network is also working to strengthen the state model wellness policy and, when appropriate, encourage schools to adopt Safe Routes to School as part of the physical activity components of their local wellness policies. The Louisiana Network conducted research on model wellness policies and implementation strategies.

The Louisiana State Network is made up of 13 organizations, with the Louisiana Public Health Institute serving as the lead agency. Its partners include: the Action for Healthy Kids Program; the Center for Planning Excellence; the Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health; the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports; the Laboratory of Preventive Medicine at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center; the Louisiana Department of Education; the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development; Louisiana SAFE KIDS; the Louisiana State Senate; the New Orleans Recovery School District; the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Program); the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine; the University of New Orleans Department of Planning and Urban Studies.

New York

Complete Streets

The New York Network was invited to educate Buffalo's Common Council on the complete streets concept, and in May 2008 the council unanimously passed an ordinance amendment to the city charter creating a complete streets policy. After the Buffalo policy passed, Erie County was inspired to adopt a similar policy. As a result of this success, the New York Network has been promoting the new Buffalo and Erie County policies to community transportation planning committees across the state, and in July 2008 New York Network partners presented "Complete Streets from Policy to Action" at the New York State Metropolitan Planning Organization Association conference. New York Network partners also met with the New York Department of Transportation commissioner in January 2008 to encourage the state agency to adopt a statewide complete streets policy. An additional outcome of that conversation was the re-establishment of a Statewide Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Board, which the New York Network hopes will become the mechanism to bring a complete streets policy to the state, among other SRTS-related policy changes.

Strategic Highway Safety Plan

In September 2008, the New York Department of Transportation convened a working group to review current progress and to begin updating the New York State Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Recognizing that the plan is data driven, the participating New York Network provided data from the Department of Motor Vehicles and New York State Department of Health's Bureau of Injury Prevention, which clearly shows the need to address the high rate of pedestrian and bicycle injuries and fatalities among school-age youth in New York state. As a result of the finding, the plan was amended to include bicycles, and to endorse the implementation of the statewide Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Board, as well as statewide public and professional trainings on bicycle and pedestrian design, infrastructure and rules of the road.

Statewide SRTS Campaign

The New York Network also was awarded a \$72,000 grant from the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee to provide a statewide education and encouragement campaign during FY2007-2008, which includes a student poster and writing contest, SRTS trainings and a webinar on the implementation of a walking school bus program.

The New York State Network is made up of 22 organizations, with Be Active New York State serving as the lead agency. Some of its partners include: the American Association of Retired Persons-New York, the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee; the New York Bicycling Coalition; the New York State Association of Traffic Safety Boards; the New York State Department of Health; the New York State Department of Transportation; the New York State Metropolitan Planning Association.

State SRTS Program

The Oklahoma Network also serves as the advisory committee for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's SRTS program. The first round of funding resulted in \$6.5 million in applications for an available \$3 million in funds, and the school selection process concluded in October 2008. However, only \$170,000 in non-infrastructure funding applications were received, so the Oklahoma Network will be conducting outreach to promote the importance of non-infrastructure in SRTS programs.

Educational Standards and Promotion

In August 2008, the Oklahoma chapter of the American Automobile Association (AAA) joined as an Oklahoma Network partner. The Oklahoma Network is now assisting AAA in promoting their Student Safety Patrol Program in elementary schools throughout the state. This will provide additional pedestrian safety training to the children who participate in the program. In addition, the Oklahoma Network's curriculum action team completed a general revision of the nationally-recognized comprehensive Texas SuperCyclist bicycle traffic safety and skills course for students

in grades 4-5, so that it can be adapted for use in Oklahoma. Once finalized, the Oklahoma Network will work with the Department of Education to have the curriculum adopted as part of physical education programs in the state's elementary schools during the 2009-2010 school year and ensure that physical education teachers receive training to competently implement the curriculum. The Oklahoma Network is also working with the Department of Transportation to incorporate the curriculum into the non-infrastructure portion of the state SRTS funding application process, and to promote the SuperCyclist curriculum and a pedestrian traffic safety course from Human Relations Media, *Grades K-4: Getting to School Safely*, to encourage schools and parents to embrace SRTS and to generate higher physical activity levels and increased safety among the students.

Outreach

The Oklahoma Network is also conducting outreach to SRTS stakeholders through statewide conference presentations, including the SafeKids Coalition conference, the Safe, Healthy Schools conference and the Fit Kids conference. These conferences took place in September 2008, in addition to the State Elementary Schools conference which was held in January 2009.

The Oklahoma Network consists of 24 organizations, with the Oklahoma Bicycling Coalition as the lead agency. Some of its partners include: the American Automobile Association; the American Heart Association; the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments; the Oklahoma Department of Education; the Oklahoma Department of Health; the Oklahoma Department of Transportation; Oklahoma Fit Kids; and the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

State SRTS Program

During the spring 2007 call for projects, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) SRTS program received more than 360 applications totaling approximately \$69 million in funding requests. In 2008 grants totaling \$24.7 million were awarded to 244 SRTS projects. With 254 counties in Texas, there is still a need to reach out to communities, so the Texas Network is building program knowledge across the state for the final Texas SRTS program call, which is anticipated to occur in late spring 2009.

The Texas Network worked with the TxDOT to organize a SRTS Walk to School Day promotional program for the international event held on October 8, 2008, and approximately 40,000 Safe Routes-Texas zipper pulls were distributed to more than 90 schools. The Texas Network is promoting SRTS best practices to communities across the state, and is developing and publicizing a list of Texas state SRTS resources that will be distributed and posted on a centralized Safe Routes-Texas Web site. The Network is also actively working with TxDOT to identify relevant policy improvement options for the state. The Texas Network was invited to review TxDOT's Draft *Safe Routes to School Guidebook for the State of Texas*, and provided recommendations in November 2008.

SRTS Evaluation Project

The Texas Network is also collaborating with Live Smart Texas, a grant project supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that aims to evaluate two Texas childhood obesity prevention policies: SRTS and the Women, Infants, and Children Food Access and Availability Project. Live Smart Texas will conduct a statewide evaluation of the two policies, create broad-scale public health system partnerships serving as a basis for further statewide obesity prevention and develop targeted approaches for different segments of the at-risk populations.

Action Plan

In fall 2008, the Texas Network researched the status of eight policy categories in Texas: the SRTS State program, complete streets, school wellness policies, fine-based funding and traffic-calming mechanisms, large-scale traffic safety education programs and curriculum, school siting, implementation of SRTS-related legislation, and the state Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Once the research was completed, the Texas Network convened to rank the policies in order of importance and to incorporate them into a draft SRTS state action plan, which was approved by the Texas Network in December 2008. The action plan will be reviewed every six months, and action teams will be periodically convened to address urgent policy issues.

The newly-formed Texas State Network consists of 17 organizations, with the Texas Transportation Institute as the lead agency. Its partners include: the American Diabetes Association, South Central Region; the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services; the City of Austin; the City of Bryan; the City of San Antonio-Bexar County; the League of American Bicyclists; the Dell Center for Advancement of Healthy Living at the University of Texas School of Public Health; the Texas Active Living Network; the Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension; the Texas A&M University School of Rural Public Health; the Texas Bicycle Coalition; Texas Christian University; the Texas Department of State Health Services; the Texas Department of Transportation; the Texas Education Agency; the Texas Parent-Teacher Association.

Virginia

State SRTS Program

In 2008, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) awarded nearly \$1 million in infrastructure projects and nearly \$200,000 in non-infrastructure projects in its second round of funding. The Virginia Network will continue to promote the current application cycle for the VDOT SRTS funds and will encourage schools and communities to submit applications. The Virginia Network, as well as organizational representatives of the Network, responded formally to VDOT's draft application guidelines prior to public release. The Network also serves as the advisory committee to the VDOT SRTS program.

Outreach

The Virginia Network launched a new Virginia SRTS Web site in the spring of 2008, allowing SRTS stakeholders in Virginia to connect with national resources and to monitor how other communities throughout the state are building and managing their SRTS programs. The Virginia Network has also established a monthly electronic newsletter that has a statewide distribution. In summer 2008, the Virginia Network established a partnership with the Virginia Parent-Teacher Association. Virginia Network partners have since been attending their state and regional trainings to promote SRTS.

Complete Streets

The Virginia Network also formally responded to VDOT's draft guidelines for its secondary street acceptance requirements. The Virginia Network's response included recommendations to require more stringent connectivity requirements for new developments near schools. The final guidelines have not been issued to date.

Virginia code currently penalizes cities' maintenance funds when there is a reduction in "lane miles," the calculation of which includes the width of lanes. Therefore, if a city adds a bike lane to any roads, it reduces the lane miles and thus reduces the amount of funding the city receives in annual maintenance funds, which discourages complete streets. The Virginia Network is working to eliminate this penalty, to encourage more bike lanes in school zones.

Other Accomplishments

In spring 2008, the Virginia Network crossing guard action team began working with the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Department of Motor Vehicles to standardize the curriculum for training school crossing guards. A number of jurisdictions have crossing guard training programs, but the curricula vary greatly.

The Department of Education is also revising its guidelines for creating Wellness Policies in public schools, and the Virginia Network is working to include model language promoting SRTS in these revised guidelines.

In addition, the Virginia Network helped to refine and promote usage of Virginia's officially-recognized bicycle safety certification program, BikeSmart Basics, which certified more than 100 physical education instructors in 2008. These certified instructors are now able to conduct bicycle skills trainings in schools and for other youth-oriented programs across Virginia.

The Virginia Network consists of 13 organizations, with BikeWalk Virginia as the lead agency. Its partners include:

Action for Healthier Kids; the Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation; the City of Alexandria; the Chester Community Association; Kubilins Transportation Group; SafeKids Virginia; Trips for Kids; the Virginia Department of Education; the Virginia Department of Health; the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles; the Virginia Department of Transportation; and the Virginia Parent-Teacher Association.

Local School Project

OVERVIEW

The Local School Project was launched in spring 2008 in all 10 State Network jurisdictions, to provide technical assistance and resources to low-income, diverse schools. In California, the District of Columbia, Georgia and Virginia, a technical service provider has been contracted for \$1,000 each month to facilitate the program at the local school with additional funding from the Kaiser Permanente Foundation. The other six states rely on volunteer champions to execute the SRTS program. Each project began in spring 2008 by utilizing a set of criteria to identify a local school. Each school district and city had to sign a memorandum of understanding about how they will support the project's effort, including establishing or joining a school team at the adopted school to manage the SRTS program, and applying for federal funding from the state SRTS program. All 10 schools are conducting an evaluation and have completed parent surveys and student tallies. The four Kaiser-funded schools have also completed observational data collection and parent focus groups. During the 2008-2009 school year, a comprehensive SRTS program is being implemented in each school, and in fall 2009 a sustainability plan will be initiated for each school. The following are highlights of activities completed to date.



California

The Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition is the contracted technical service provider at Kawana Elementary school in Santa Rosa. Eight schools in south Santa Rosa, including Kawana, were recently awarded a three-year SRTS grant from the state for \$500,000. The City of Santa Rosa was awarded a \$611,000 infrastructure grant for improved school crossings that access Kawana Elementary. A Walking Wednesdays walking school bus program was launched at the school on Walk and Bike to School Day, and more than 30 students from a nearby apartment complex participate regularly. The program focuses on creating walking maps, providing pedestrian safety education, completing small public works projects around the school, encouraging police enforcement of speeding on nearby roadways and promoting cleanup of abandoned houses in the neighborhood.

District of Columbia

A transportation planning expert from Howard University is the technical service provider at DC Prep Elementary and Middle school. This charter school was accepted as a part of DC's SRTS pilot program, which selected 12 schools to benefit from the \$5 million in federal funding. The program is initially focusing on a remote drop-off walking school bus program for the 60 percent of students who live more than two miles from the school; but the program will also address the needs of students who live nearby. A walking staging area was established during Walk and Bike to School Day on October 8, 2008. Since there is substantial traffic congestion near the school during arrival and departure times, which is compounded by three neighboring schools and a small business, the District and SRTS school team are working to improve traffic flow and reduce the number of cars around the school.

Georgia

At Knollwood Elementary in the Belvedere county area of metropolitan Atlanta, the technical service provider established a school team and is working with the physical education coach and the Community in Schools coordinator to implement bicycle and pedestrian safety as part of physical education and after-school curricula. In addition, a walking school bus program was launched with immediate success. Dozens of students participate in this volunteer-led program, in which parent volunteers are recruited to supervise two walking school buses on the trip to school. The school is preparing to apply for funding from the state SRTS program. Since the school's entire student population lives within one mile of the school and the school staff and neighborhood are very supportive, the potential for long-term success is great at Knollwood Elementary.

Illinois

The Champaign-Urbana SRTS Project is a motivated and well-organized community coalition of organizations and agencies working to improve walking and bicycling to all local schools, including King Elementary. The school is part of a community-wide \$85,000 state SRTS program grant award that will replace all school and speed signs, improve sidewalks and crossings and provide encouragement and education for its students. The City of Urbana is also spending \$61,000 for SRTS efforts in town, leveraging additional resources.

Kentucky

At Lebanon Elementary school in rural Marion County, a local champion is spearheading the effort to improve road crossings near the school. Two Marion County schools including Lebanon will share a \$137,000 infrastructure grant from the state SRTS program. A walking school bus program is being launched at the school with local funds and volunteers, and a school team is being organized to expand the program.

Louisiana

Tulane University has spearheaded the effort at Drew Elementary in New Orleans, in partnership with the Louisiana Public Health Institute. SRTS efforts at the school have already led to the first-ever New Orleans bike lane being installed near the school, along with other infrastructure improvements paid for by \$112,530 in New Orleans city funds. The school team expects to be awarded a \$300,000 grant from the state SRTS program.

New York

At Buffalo's Hamlin Park Elementary school, Be Active New York State is leading the SRTS effort that is part of a multimillion dollar neighborhood revitalization effort for this historic low-income neighborhood. Hamlin Park's SRTS program has received \$550,000 in infrastructure funding from the state SRTS program, and the Hamlin Park Neighborhood Association is leading the SRTS school team forward. Out of 424 students in the neighborhood, only 84 attend Hamlin Park, so the school team and the city of Buffalo will work to increase the number of neighborhood students attending the school, and increase walking and bicycling to the school.

Oklahoma

At Highland Park Elementary in Stillwater, more than 200 students walked to school during Walk and Bike to School Day on October 8, 2008. The Parent-Teacher Association and school board are supporting this SRTS program, and the SRTS school team is planning spring 2009 encouragement and education programs. State grant awards have not yet been announced in Oklahoma, but the city plans to apply for funding to improve infrastructure routes to the school and to develop a comprehensive SRTS program.

Texas

At Johnson Elementary in Bryan, the principal is a health advocate who is very supportive of the SRTS program at the school. A successful bike rodeo at the school has inspired more bicycling to school, and the school team is planning further encouragement and education elements for spring 2009.

Virginia

The DC Metro Trips for Kids chapter is providing technical services for Mt. Vernon Elementary school in Alexandria. The program launched with a highly successful Walk and Bike to School Day in August 2008, with more than 300 participating students. The school team has instituted a monthly raffle program and a Valentines Day "Heart Healthy" Bike to School Day is planned, along with another encouragement event in spring 2009. The city of Alexandria will be applying for state SRTS grant funds for Mt. Vernon, and has already made nearly \$2 million in city-funded SRTS infrastructure improvements throughout the city.

Next Steps

1

Monitor New or Modified State Policies to Ensure Effective Implementation

When State Networks accomplish their goals for creating or modifying policies in their jurisdictions, they have only completed phase one of their work. The next step is to ensure that the policy is actually implemented. An agency that agrees to make a change, or is required to through legislative action, may not actually begin to implement the policy or modified policy unless there is outside pressure. For instance, a state may adopt a complete streets policy, mandating that state road projects take all roadway users into account when designing and rebuilding roads. But the state may not actually enforce the policy, leaving local engineers to continue business as usual, and leading to roads that do not accommodate bicycles, pedestrians, mass transit and others. The State Network may need to campaign for implementation of the new policy, and present recommended language and best practices from other states, in order to ensure effective implementation.

2

Review State Action Plan Policy Rankings, Tasks and Goals

Now that the SRTS State Network Projects have been in operation for up to two years, the original policy rankings that State Network partners approved at the beginning of the process may no longer apply. The State Network may decide that another policy or set of policies should become the primary targets of State Network activity until the next review takes place in six months or less.

3

Engage New Partners

State Networks were launched in 2007 with an original core group of partners. Many of those partners are still very active with their State Network, making them invaluable to our work. Many of the State Networks have experienced staff turnover or the loss of funding for a group or agency. In some cases the State Network has encouraged an agency to replace a lost staff member quickly. In other cases, an agency or organization has lost funding and will not be able to replace staff members or volunteers who were involved with their State Network. Networks are encouraged to actively seek out new partner groups, individuals and agency staffers. In 2009 the Networks also will be conducting more outreach to organizations that promote smart growth, the environment and sustainability, as there is an increasing focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and SRTS can serve as a catalyst for educating policy-makers on how transportation affects land use, smart growth and the environment.

4

Look To the Future, Think Outside the Box

The State Network Project started in 2007 by conducting research, prioritizing and engaging new partners on eight primary policy issues. However, each state has also identified additional issues that may or may not be specific to their state. State Networks have accomplished many goals on the original eight policies, but are now looking toward the future by exploring new policy options. Our learning network among the 10 jurisdictions provides a forum for network organizers to learn from each other about policy change in other states. And by engaging new partners, they are learning about new issues and creating new ideas for their State Network to improve the ability of children to walk and bicycle to school safely. These new policies or ideas will each undergo a research phase, then a task list will be developed and the policy will be incorporated into the State Network's action plan.

5

Document Success

In December 2009 the three-year pilot phase of the State Network project will be coming to a close. For 2010 and beyond, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership hopes to continue this program in existing states and expand its focus to other states. During 2009 the State Networks will be documenting their successes in advancing SRTS programs, leveraging resources and bringing together partners to create policy changes that benefit the built environment and public health to help create a brighter future for children.

Resources

For more information about the SRTS State Network Project, or for specific information about SRTS in your state, please visit: www.saferoutespartnership.org/state.

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership has created or participated in the development of the following publications, which can be downloaded from: www.saferoutespartnership.org/mediacenter.

Six-Part SRTS Report Series:

1 [Safe Routes to School: A Catalyst for Building Partnerships and Leveraging Resources](#)

This report showcases how SRTS programs are resulting in the implementation of infrastructure improvements that close gaps in the non-motorized transportation network. Four communities were featured: Avondale, Ariz.; Bozeman, Mont.; Knoxville, Tenn.; and Miami, Fla.

2 [Safe Routes to School: Increases Physical Activity and Improves Health](#)

This report indicates how SRTS is being institutionalized at select schools, and providing a mechanism to improve student and school health. Local case studies from Benton County, Ore.; Eau Claire, Wis.; Flagstaff, Ariz.; and Garfield, N.J.; are featured in the report.

3 [Safe Routes to School: State Networks Create Policy Change](#)

This report outlines how State Networks can create policy change by showcasing the work of the SRTS State Network Project in ten jurisdictions since 2007.

4 [Safe Routes to School: Steps to a Greener Future—How walking and bicycling to school reduces carbon emissions and air pollutants](#)

This report profiles five communities that have made strides in reducing carbon dioxide emissions and harmful pollutants around schools through the implementation of SRTS programs.

5 [Safe Routes to School: Leads to Greater Collaboration with Public Health and School Officials](#)

This report showcases examples of collaboration between public health and school officials at the state level through Safe Routes to School Advisory Committees, school siting guidelines, state standards for physical activity or wellness policies and more.

6 [Safe Routes to School: Improves the Built Environment](#)

As demonstrated through 10 jurisdiction profiles and four local case studies, the federal SRTS program is changing the built environment to help improve walkability and bikeability, providing improved safety and opportunities for physical activity for children and serving as a catalyst for creating complete streets, as well as city-wide efforts to increase the livability of the whole community.

SRTS State Network Project:

[Establishing a Safe Routes to School State Network: A 10-Step Guide](#)

This report describes a process that can be used in any state to bring together diverse partners, create a SRTS State Network and initiate policy changes that will make it safer and easier for children to be able to walk and bicycle to schools.

[Safe Routes to School State Network Project: 2008 Annual Progress Report: Building Momentum and Policy Change](#)

This report contains state summaries, lessons learned and next steps for the State Network Projects' second year.

[Safe Routes to School State Network Project: 2007 Annual Progress Report: Building Diverse Partnerships and Action Plans](#)

This report contains state summaries, lessons learned and next steps for the State Network Projects' first year.

Other Publications:

[Safe Routes to School: Progress in Implementing the Program but a Comprehensive Plan to Evaluate Program Outcomes is Needed](#)

This report is a SRTS National Partnership analysis of the U.S. Government Accounting Offices report on the status of the national SRTS program, released on July 31, 2008.

[Safe Routes to School: A Transportation Legacy—A National Strategy to Increase Safety and Physical Activity among American Youth](#)

The National Safe Routes to School Task Force, mandated by Congress, completed its final report in 2008, which describes the challenges, successes and strategies for the federal SRTS program. The SRTS National Partnership was a member of the task force.



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